



LEST WE FORGET

# STAND TO

'THE PRICE OF LIBERTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE'

NUMBER 140 June-July 2008



VETERANS' NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL

ACT NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL

## Benefits begin to flow

Some improved entitlements to about 310,000 of Australia's veterans and their dependants took effect on July 1.

They deliver a number of increased payments to veterans, war widows, widowers and their dependants.

As a result of legislation that has recently passed the Parliament, the Government will now:

Automatically grant **war widows'** pensions to surviving partners of temporary special- or intermediate-rate pensioners;

Provide the income-support supplement of up to \$163.20 a fortnight to eligible **war widows and widowers** who are under 58 years old; and

Make **bereavement payments** to single recipients of the special rate and extreme disablement adjustment disability pensions who die in indigent circumstances.

About 270,000 veterans, too, are about to receive the second quarterly instalment of increased Utilities Allowance, worth \$125 a family. In addition 41,000 (mainly war widows) are about to be paid the second instalment of Senior Concession Allowance of \$125.

Seventy-six thousand eligible veterans and carers will benefit also from an increase in the telephone allowance from \$88 to \$132 a year to help meet the cost of an internet connection.

Other initiatives that were part of the 2008-09 budget and were paid recently include a \$500 bonus to 310,000 eligible veterans and bonuses of between \$600 and \$1000 to 17,000 carers.

These amounts are in addition to the fairer indexation system and the 5 per cent increase in the base of all pensions at the General Rate that was implemented in March 2008.

"These changes are a result of the Government taking action to meet veterans' concerns and delivering on our commitments," the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin said.

## They're back!



Picture by Corporal Corinne Boer

The spectators stood on a balcony of a shopping centre to gain a better view of the soldiers as they marched through Brisbane. The cheers of support for the soldiers drowned out the sound of the band that lead the parade. The troops' return to Australia marks the end of the Australian deployment in southern Iraq and ends a significant milestone for Australian military history. Brisbane hosted the Welcome Home Parade to commemorate the Australian deployment to Iraq and congratulate the soldiers who have taken part in this operation. An estimated 700 soldiers participated in the parade. The event acknowledged all the deployments and included the Overwatch Battle Group, the Al Muthanna Task Group and the Australian Army Training Team Iraq. The Australian commitment to southern Iraq included the deployment of an infantry and cavalry battle group for more than three years and a dedicated training team for about four years.

## Minister seeks views of veterans

The first meeting seeking the views of veterans on the best way to give them a more effective voice at the highest levels of government was held in Adelaide on July 3 by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin.

It was the first of eight such meetings to be held nation-wide to discuss the structure and role of the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-Service Matters. More than 100 individuals and organisations across Australia have responded to a discussion paper on the Council published earlier this year.

Mr Griffin said a number of options were on the table, including membership, appointment of the chairperson, how matters are referred to the Council, how it should operate and how it related to his department.

"The Government is also reviewing all consultation mechanisms between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the broader defence and ex-service communities. ... I want to ensure the Council meets the needs of veterans and ex-service personnel before its establishment later this year. These ... meetings with ... the veteran community are essential to achieve that goal. Following these consultation meetings I intend to appoint the Advisory Council by the end of August," he said.

"During the parliamentary recess I will be travelling to meet veterans in every state and territory to discuss these issues in person."

The minister says he is looking forward to hearing "the always forthright views" of the veteran and defence communities.

Further details of meetings and copies of submissions are available at [minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm](http://minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm)

## 'Flu season is here

It is possible to contract flu at any time of the year but most people will become infected between July and September. For most regions of Australia, flu vaccination is best carried out before May but it's never too late.

People often confuse the common cold with influenza. However, "colds" are usually less severe. Flu, on the other hand, is a potentially debilitating viral illness that affects the whole body, symptoms including fever, headaches, muscle aches and pains.

## Vietnam veterans' family study in progress

As a result of the report completed in 2007 of the Intergenerational Health Effects of Military Service, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has launched the Family Study Program. The first focus of this program will be on the Vietnam Veterans' Family Study.

The Government has committed some \$13.5 million towards the progressive implementation under contract of the range of studies under the umbrella of the Family Study Program. DVA says a large number of veterans

and family members be involved directly in this study.

To keep the many veterans and family members informed about the progress of these studies and the outcomes, provision has been made on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au/health/research/fsp/vv](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/research/fsp/vv) for the first of these studies, the Vietnam Veterans Family Study.

In addition information can be obtained through the DVA Health Study Line on 1800 502 302.

## PoW memorial

Some memorials outside Canberra can now be recognised as National Memorials with the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial at Ballarat being the first to receive such recognition.

The Member for Ballarat, Catherine King, said, "I would like to recognise the Ballarat RSL, the Ex-Prisoners of War Association, and the City and people of Ballarat for their tireless efforts - their hard work is the real reason this monument will be recognised nationally."

# Now a search wanted for POW ship



After the recent discovery of HMAS Sydney and the German raider HSK Kormoran in the Indian Ocean 67 years after their World War II battle, there has been a flurry of interest in locating the *Montevideo Maru*, in which 1053 Australian POWs and civilians lost their lives.

According to the Australian War Memorial's records, on 1 July 1942 the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk off the northern coast of Luzon by an American submarine.

1,053 Australians were lost in the greatest single maritime tragedy in Australia's history.

Paul Jones, of Curtin, ACT, wrote to *The Canberra Times* on June 9, "With HMAS Sydney located and the last resting place of so many Australians known at last, we can now properly turn our much-needed focus to locating the *Montevideo Maru* and the 1053 men lost with her.

"Australia's greatest maritime disaster, the *Montevideo Maru*, transporting 1053 soldiers and civilian prisoners of war from the occupied New Guinea islands of New Britain and New Ireland, was torpedoed by an American submarine off the Philippines on July 1, 1942.

"There was some interest when the *Montevideo Maru* Memorial was commissioned at Ballarat on February 7, 2004, as part of the prisoner-of-war wall commemoration.

"Also, from time to time over recent years, the media has shown interest, including *Compass* on April 20 this year, in the fate of the Brunswick Salvation Army Band.

"The band served as medical attendants for 2/22 Battalion, which was lost with the exception of a single survivor, now living in Victoria.

"As the 66th anniversary of the sinking looms, it is heartening to learn that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is considering an appeal to provide funds to search for the location of the *Montevideo Maru* with the prospect of the site's being declared a war grave."



This prompted Patrick Ryan, of Turner, ACT, to respond, "As a former merchant seaman, I follow matters nautical with interest.

"Since HMAS Sydney was found there seems to be [something] of a clamour to search for other vessels sunk during World War II, such as the *Centaur* and now the *Montevideo Maru*

"Putting aside the physical difficulties involved — the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk [near] the Mariana Trench, the deepest part in the world at over 9000m — one has to ask what benefit would come from locating this wreck.

"The ocean floor is the graveyard of thousands of seafarers and others and they should be left in peace.

"HMAS Sydney was different, as there was some mystery as to how she was sunk and why there were no survivors; not the case with the *Montevideo Maru*."

The Hon Terence Cole AO RFD QC is heading the Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the loss of HMAS Sydney in an engagement with the German raider HSK Kormoran, when the warship went down with all hands on 19 November, 1941.

## Interest invited

Les Drew, of Greenway, ACT, is the local contact for a group pressing the Government for support to find the *Montevideo Maru* and for its appropriate recognition of the sacrifice of those who died.

He suggests that anyone with an interest, particularly relatives, should register their interest by contacting Cynthia Schmidt by email at [rabau1941@gmail.com](mailto:rabau1941@gmail.com).

The Australian War Memorial has more information about the loss of the ship, including a transcript and audio of a Roll of Honour talk, presented by Ian Hodges in July 2002; the report by Major H.S. Williams, dated October 1, 1945, for the Recovered Personnel Division on the Japanese steamer *Montevideo Maru*; and a list of passengers believed to have been on the ship.

# Fromelles mass grave yields its savage secrets

Work at the limited excavation of a World War I burial site at Pheasant Wood, Fromelles, France, ended on June 13 after archaeologists confirmed the presence of the human remains at the site, as well as providing an assessment of the number of individuals and the condition of the remains.

The Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division team has confirmed that the remains of several hundred men lie at the site as well as artifacts that signify their Australian and British nationality.

Preliminary reports indicate that the remains are of a skeletal nature and seem to be in good condition.

A ceremony was held in Fromelles on June 13 to acknowledge the significance of the ground and provide the local community with an opportunity to pay their respects to those who have lain buried in their field for more than 90 years.

Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon Warren Snow-



Workers sift painstakingly through the World War I burial site at Pheasant Wood, Fromelles, France, where several hundred of the fallen lie.

don MP, said, "It is important that we recognise the professionalism of the survey team and the support they have received from the British Government, the French authorities, the Common-

wealth War Graves Commission and the local community; and of course we must remember that it is likely that none of this would have happened without the foresight and dedication

of Mr Lambis Englezos, the amateur historian and head of the Friends of the 15th Brigade whose research led to Army's decision to investigate."

The ceremony included prayers for peace by Reverend John Porter, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and Father Roger Duprez, a local priest. Official wreaths were laid by the Australian Ambassador to France, His Excellency Mr David Ritchie; the Mayor of Fromelles, M. Hubert Huchette; the senior Australian Army representative on the Fromelles Evaluation Group, Major General Mike O'Brien; the UK Ministry of Defence's Defence Services Secretary, Major General Matthew Sykes; the Director, France, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Mr David Symons; and the head of Australian Army History Unit, Mr Roger Lee.

Members of the public, including Fromelles residents and Australian nationals, were also invited to lay wreaths.

## STAND TO

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# Memorials to mark two world wars

The winner of the National Memorial Design Competition for two separate but complementary war memorials to the fallen of World War I and World War II was scheduled to be announced early in July. The two new memorials will be built on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin at the southern end of ANZAC Parade, Canberra.

The members of the Memorial(s) Development Committee, which was formed in 2005, were drawn together by a shared belief that the loss, suffering and sacrifice caused by World War I and World War II should be recognised in the nation's capital.

The task they set themselves was to elicit support to plan, design, construct and dedicate separate but complementary memorials to World War I and World War II in Canberra's National Triangle.

Australia's participation in war in the 20th century cost more than 101,000 Australian lives, yet only 1% of these died after 1950. While all post-1950 conflicts claimed too many lives, the terrible catalogue of war dead from these conflicts is dwarfed by the massive list of Australians who died in the two world wars.

Early in the 20th Century, two generations of a very young nation with a relatively small population absorbed most of the physical and emotional battering from our participation in global conflict. People had to give meaning to the tragic impact of that involvement. They had to find commemorative forms to express a country's grieving. Somehow, Australians had to acknowledge the supreme sacrifice of their fallen and say thanks. They did so by establishing memorials, shrines and sites of dedication across the country.

The Australian War Memorial was intended originally to commemorate the Great War. However, because of its delayed completion in 1941, the Government extended the memorial's charter to include World War II. Again,



*Mock ups of the areas designated for two new memorials where ANZAC Parade meets Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra.*

in 1952, the charter was extended to become Australia's national memorial to all wars. Since then, and after Australia's subsequent commitment to a range of military and peacekeeping operations, the purpose of the Australian War Memorial is now broader, to "commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who have died in war".

The Australian War Memorial, its grounds and the ANZAC Parade precinct include many outstanding national memorials and artefacts recognising the contribution of Australians who have served the nation or paid the ultimate sacrifice. Although all Australians are impressed by the quality of the War Memorial and the ANZAC Parade memorials precinct, the unfortunate fact is that the precinct does not provide a focal point for the two global conflicts of the 20th century that helped shape our nation.

Put simply, although we have memorials to the Vietnam War, the Korean War and, in the near future, the Boer War, we have no dedicated memorials to acknowledge specifically the enormous contribution and sacrifice of the people of those times, as well as those

who served and those who supported, made to maintain the peace and prosperity of our nation and our allies in World War I and World War II.

In the last three and a half years, the Memorial(s) Development Committee has gained the support of the National Capital Authority as well as the Federal Government. Two prime sites have been allocated on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin at the major axis point of the nation's capital. The MDC has gained also the support and involvement of the Governor General and former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer as Patron-in-Chief and Patron respectively.

This project will change the landscape of our national capital by providing two world-class memorials sited in the very heart of the National Triangle on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

On February 18, the Governor General launched the National Memorial Design Competition at Parliament House with representatives of both Government and Opposition and World War II veterans and their families. To mark this occasion, a crew from the Temora Aviation Museum flew a World

War II Hudson Bomber (the only remaining Hudson flying) over ANZAC Parade and Parliament House.

The design competition will be a two-stage process. A jury, led by RSL National President Major General Bill Crews, will shortlist four designs from a field of over 170 international and national entrants.

At the end of this first stage, the four entrants will be invited to enter a second stage in which their designs will be refined and developed. At the end of the second stage, the jury will select a design to be endorsed by the bipartisan Canberra National Memorials Committee. This process will be completed by early July when a winning design will be announced.

The Memorial(s) Development Committee will keep the Australian defence community informed of the progress of this very important project, so look out for future articles detailing the winning design and details on the construction and dedication of the two memorials.

More information on the Memorial(s) Development Committee and the Memorials is available at:

[www.mdc.org.au](http://www.mdc.org.au)

## Out of a neglected area, they are remembered

After more than 30 years an RSL Remembrance stone has been relocated to the Ex-Service Section of the Gungahlin Cemetery.

Originally erected in a grove of trees on the Remembrance Driveway at Woolshed Creek, just outside Canberra, the recent rerouting of the Federal Highway made access limited and the area fell into disrepair.

The stone, inscribed and dedicated "In Memory of Departed Comrades" was first erected on November 9, 1975 and was relocated and rededicated in May this year.

A special guest at the rededication was Mr Ray Kelly OAM, who was ACT Branch Treasurer at the time the proposal to erect the stone in its original location was proposed.

Others present were the ACT Branch President, Mr Gary Brodie OAM, representatives of various ACT sub-branches and members of the Board of the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, who provided an alternative site for the stone at the cemetery.

Gary Brodie thanked Project Officer



*Pastor Wayne Lyons, left, of the High Street Church, Queanbeyan, dedicates the relocated stone to departed comrades.*

and Branch Vice President Jan Paulga for his efforts and also the Cemeteries Authority for making the site available.

Mr Robert Smeaton, chairman of the

Cemeteries Authority, said the authority was pleased to accept the stone and believed it enhanced the area reserved for ex-service graves.

Pastor Wayne Lyons, of the High Street Church, Queanbeyan, dedicated the stone to departed comrades.

A bronze plaque outlining the history of the stone will be affixed later.

Jan Paulga welcomed all present, outlined the bureaucratic processes that have taken three years, and conveyed his thanks to the Cemeteries Authority, Mr Gary Brodie and branch secretary Mr James Davidson for their support.

## \$21.5m for good ideas

Australian companies and universities will share \$21.5 million in the latest round of defence capability development funding. Twelve proposals have been selected for further development under the Capability and Technology Demonstrator Program — from wearable solar panels to submarine sonar, grenade launchers to GPS anti-jam units. Details at: <http://www.dsto.defence.gov.au/collaboration/3743/>

# Deseal/reseal inquiry seeks submissions

The parliamentary inquiry into the RAAF's F-111 deseal/reseal maintenance program has begun and disclosed its terms of reference. It is calling for submissions, which should be made to the Defence Subcommittee Secretariat.

The inquiry will examine:

- the adequacy of eligibility periods, ex-gratia payments and the health benefits provided to date; and
- the decision-making process relating to ex-gratia payments and compensation claims.

The F-111 deseal/reseal program exposed about 700 RAAF personnel and civilians to a range of chemicals and solvents when replacing sealant in the aircrafts' fuel tanks. The inquiry is a response to the public concerns of the F-111 Deseal/Reseal Support Group.

The inquiry is being conducted by the Defence Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. The committee will hold its first public hearing on July 21 and is scheduled to deliver its report on October 23.

The inquiry, chaired by Arch Bevis, will have the power to examine all aspects of the previous government's response to the Study of Health Outcomes in Aircraft Maintenance Personnel (SHOAMP).

The committee will consider:

- if the range of health benefits and eligibility periods under the health-care scheme were adequate compared with other schemes;
- if the ex-gratia payments offered were adequate, given the findings of the SHOAMP study;
- how the payments related to benefits under the Health Care Scheme;
- if they were consistent with one-off



A technician works inside one of the F-111 tanks. This picture was taken in 2005.

payments to other veteran groups

- the appropriateness, timeliness and transparency of the over-all handling and administration of ex-gratia payments; and
- compensation claims by participants and their families.

If the committee determines that any of these aspects was inadequate, it will recommend what alternatives should be considered to provide an adequate response to former deseal/reseal workers and their families.

The Government says it will continue to meet the health and support needs of deseal/reseal workers and their families while the committee examines these issues.

The terms of reference are listed below. Submissions are now being called for and should be made by June 26 to the Defence Sub-Committee Secretariat Parliament House Canberra ACT 2602 or emailed to [jscfadt@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscfadt@aph.gov.au).

For information, telephone the secretariat on 02 6277 4466.

# New house owners' scheme incentive to stay on

The new ADF Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS) was scheduled to come into operation from July 1.

Legislation has been agreed in the House of Representatives and is now subject to passage through the Senate, expected by June 26.

The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme is one of a number of initiatives to encourage ADF personnel to serve longer.

The Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, said the scheme recognised loyalty and dedication with progressively higher home-loan subsidies to permanent members who served beyond the critical separation points of 4, 8 and 12 years, and reservists with service past 8 years.

ADF personnel will have a choice of three providers, each of which has undertaken as part of the tender process to offer products equal to or better than available in the general market.

The successful home loan provider panel members are:

- National Australia Bank Limited;
- Australian Defence Credit Union Limited; and
- Defence Force Credit Union Limited.

Mr Snowdon said, "The new scheme treats all partners of deceased equally.

"Spouses will inherit the same subsidy entitlements the deceased held, and in fact waive the four-year qualifying period. This applies to the partners of all deceased regardless of the circumstances of death."

# Inquiry's terms of reference — and how to have your say

## Terms of reference for parliamentary inquiry into claims for compensation by former F-111 deseal/reseal workers and government responses.

The committee will investigate and review claims for compensation by former F-111 deseal/reseal workers including the Commonwealth's response to the health and support needs of former F-111 deseal/reseal workers and their families. The committee should ascertain whether the response was adequate, whether it was consistent with the findings of the Study of Health Outcomes in Aircraft Maintenance Personnel (SHOAMP) and whether the over-all administration and handling of the program was adequate.

## Answers wanted

The Inquiry will consider the adequacy and equity of the Health Care Scheme in meeting the health and support needs of participants and their families and whether this was consistent with the SHOAMP findings. Matters to be considered will include but not be limited to:

- The differences, and transitional arrangements, between the interim health scheme and the final Health Care Scheme;
- The timing of cessation of access to

the Health Care Scheme;

- The range of treatment and health benefits provided under the Health Care Scheme;
- Whether the current Health Care Scheme is consistent with the range of treatment and health benefits available to persons under other Health Care Schemes;
- The adequacy of arrangements under the Health Care Scheme affected family members (including widows) or serving members; and
- If the Health Care Scheme is not considered to be an adequate response to the health and support needs of participants and their families, consider and report on possible alternatives that are considered to be adequate in light of the findings of SHOAMP and other Health Care Schemes.

The Inquiry will consider the adequacy and equity of the financial element of the Ex Gratia Scheme and whether it was consistent with (i) the findings of SHOAMP, (ii) the Health Care Scheme response (iii) the Tier definitions, and (iv) one-off payments to other veteran groups. The Inquiry will consider, but not be limited to:

- Whether the lump sums available under the ex gratia scheme were appropriate;

- Whether the lump sums available were appropriate given the findings of the SHOAMP;
- Whether the lump sums, when considered along with the benefits available under the Health Care Scheme, were appropriate;
- Whether the lump sums available under the ex-gratia scheme were appropriated range of benefits and compensation available under other Commonwealth or state statutory schemes;
- Whether the lump sums were consistent with the definitions of tiers of participants;
- Whether the lump sums were consistent with other one-off payments made to veteran groups;
- When assessing the question of adequate remedies, whether regard should be given to the establishment of a dedicated administrative assessment and settlement scheme; and
- If the lump sums available under the ex-gratia scheme are not considered to be financially adequate, discuss what compensatory payment would be appropriate in light of the SHOAMP findings, other one-off payments made to veteran groups, and the full range of benefits and compensation available under other Commonwealth and state statutory

schemes or common-law damages available under Australian law

The Inquiry will consider whether the over-all handling and administration of ex-gratia and compensation claims was appropriate, timely and transparent for both participants and their families. The Inquiry will consider whether, but not be limited to:

- Cross agency cooperation was effective;
- The documentation and records held by both Agencies as they relate to Deseal/Reseal activities was adequate;
- The standard of evidence required to substantiate a claim was reasonable and, if not, whether alternative standards of proof may be used when making an eligibility determination;
- There has been equitable treatment of service personnel, public servants, civilian employees and contractors involved in deseal/reseal activities;
- Staffing resources were adequate to produce a timely result;
- There were unreasonable delays in the process, taking into account the complex nature of issues; and
- The over-all handling and administration of ex gratia and compensation claims was appropriate and timely.

# Fine man, warrior chief, servant of the nation

One of Australia's most distinguished wartime leaders, General Sir Francis Hassett AC KBE CB DSO LVO psc IDC, Chief of Defence Force Staff from 1976 to 1977, died on June 11.

General Hassett entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon aged 16, graduating in 1938. His career, spanning more than 42 years, saw him undertake a wide variety of positions, including Chief of the Defence Force Staff.

He saw active service in World War II, Korea and Malaya. At 23 he was the youngest officer promoted to Lieutenant Colonel during World War II, a rank at which he served with great distinction in the Korean War. As the Commander of the 3rd Battalion of the newly formed Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) he led the battalion through some of the toughest fighting of the Korean War.

## Feat of arms

General Hassett is best remembered for his achievements in command of an under-strength battalion at Maryang San, regarded as perhaps the greatest single feat of arms by the Australian Army in the Korean War.

He went on to be an innovative leader in Malaya, developing successful counterinsurgency techniques that still inform Army tactics today.

He served his nation with distinction, being mentioned in dispatches for bravery twice and receiving an immediate Distinguished Service Order after the battle of Maryang San.

A significant, enduring legacy was his reorganisation of the Army from state-based regional commands to commands based on the core functions of training and field forces. As his many decorations and honours testify, General Hassett was recognised for his inspiring leadership, constant achievement and relentless dedication to duty, in a sequence of tough and challenging appointments.

General Hassett served as Chief of the General Staff (now Chief of Army) and as Chief of Defence Force Staff.

Shortly after his appointment as Chief of Defence Force Staff, General Hassett was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1976. He retired in April 1977 and lived in Canberra. He was a fine man, warrior chief, and remarkable servant of the nation.

## Darwin posting

Francis George Hassett was born in Sydney on April 11, 1918. After completing his education at Canterbury High School, he entered the Royal Military College Duntroon, graduating in 1938. His first posting was to the Darwin Mobile Force, where he commanded the Mortar Platoon. Ironically, because of the constraints of the Defence Act, the DMF was officially designated an artillery unit and he thus began his infantry career in the artillery.

The experience gained in this unusual unit clearly prepared him well for the demands of war service. The outbreak of the war saw the then

## OBITUARY

### General Sir Francis Hassett AC KBE CB DSO LVO psc IDC



Photo By: Corporal Ricky Fuller

*The casket of General Sir Francis Hassett is mounted on a military gun-carriage as it leaves Duntroon.*

Captain Hassett posted as Adjutant to the 2/3rd Infantry Battalion. His career progressed rapidly, to Brigade Major of the 18th Brigade and, at 23 years of age, to Lieutenant Colonel and a senior staff job on the headquarters of the II Australian Corps. He finished the war as GSO I of the 3rd Australian Division on Bougainville. He was mentioned in dispatches twice and wounded in the Libyan campaign while serving with the 2/3rd.

After the war he was able to hone his professional education with a stint as instructor at the Staff College before the Korean War saw him thrust once more into battle. After briefly commanding 1RAR in Australia, he took command of 3RAR, part of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade in Korea, on July 6, 1951 and led the Battalion through some of the toughest fighting of the war. This reached its peak in October–December 1951 in Operation

## Disabilities treaty agreed

The Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee has recommended that Australia ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

"The Committee took the slightly unusual step on June 19 of tabling its recommendation [before] the final report on this inquiry to allow ratification of this Convention to proceed as quickly as possible," Committee Chairman Kelvin Thomson said.

"The Attorney General and the Human Rights Commissioner represented to the Committee the advantages that early ratification of this treaty will provide for Australia. Through timely ratification, Australia will have the opportunity to participate in selection of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. [Comprising] individuals with recognised competence and experience, this committee will monitor and promote implementation of the convention."

"As an active party in convention negotiations, the committee considered it was important that Australia continue to take a leading role in promoting the rights of people with disabilities. One way to do this is to ensure [that] we can participate in the nomination process for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

The convention will promote, protect and ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people with disabilities. Parties to the convention will be obliged to eliminate discrimi-

nation on the basis of disability and to enhance the inclusion and participation of people with a disability in society.

Report 92 and background information on the convention is available on the committee's web site: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct.htm) or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

## Discrimination law

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's revised edition of *Federal Discrimination Law* was launched in Sydney on June 26. It provides a comprehensive overview of federal unlawful discrimination case law and a detailed analysis of the relevant principles that have been developed by the courts.

## Health and safety champions

The 2008 Defence Occupational Health and Safety awards were made in four categories:

Category 1: Leadership Award for Injury Prevention and Management Commendation awarded to Navy's Fleet Command for Exemplary Leadership of the Fleet Command in part Evidenced by the Efforts to Influence and Shape the Safety Culture of the Fleet.

Category 2: Best Workplace Health and Safety Management System awarded to HMAS Harman for its Safety

Commando. In this operation, designed to strengthen the Allied position, the Commonwealth Division's objective was a line of hills to its front, 3 RAR's being Hill 317, perhaps better known as Maryang San. With careful and innovative planning and decisive leadership, 3 RAR succeeded where several previous attempts by American forces had failed.

After Korea he spent several years in key instructional and administrative posts before returning in 1960 to the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, now in Malaya, as its commander. The brigade was a key part of the Far East Strategic Reserve. On leaving Malaya, he attended the Imperial Defence College in London then spent a period as DCGS and 1968 to 1970 as GOC Northern Command.

However, in the words of the entry in the Oxford Companion to Australian Military History, his most important over-all contributions to the Army were still to come. In 1970–71 he headed the Army Reorganisation Planning Staff and was instrumental in a major overhaul of the Army's internal structures. Having proposed the new structures, he was appointed Vice-CGS and charged with implementing the changes.

In 1973 he was appointed CGS of the revitalised Australian Army and in 1975 Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

After a diverse and demanding career, General Hassett retired in April 1977 to live in Canberra. He published a number of learned articles and papers on Defence topics.

## More evidence on obesity

The House of Representatives Health Committee heard from some of Victoria's leading experts on obesity when it held a public hearing in Melbourne on June 20 for the federal parliamentary inquiry into obesity in Australia.

Also giving evidence were the lead authors of a recently issued report, *Australia's Future Fat Bomb*, Professor Simon Stewart of the Baker Heart Research Institute, Professor Boyd Swinburn, Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University.

For more information contact the Inquiry Secretary on by telephone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's web site: [www.aph.gov.au/haa](http://www.aph.gov.au/haa)

# RSL ACT award and certificate presentations



In the course of the 82nd RSL ACT Branch Congress, Major General Steve Gower AO AO [Mil] (Rtd), Director of the Australian War Memorial, presented a number of prestigious RSL national awards and certificates to the following RSL ACT members:

## MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

John Joseph Merrick

## LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Loraina Lillian Dorham OAM  
George Derek Fowler  
David Graeme Millar

## LONG SERVICE AWARDS

A member who has given not less than 50 years' cumulative service may be granted a Long Service Award. This year, the following members were recipients of this award:

Clive Edward Gardner (City of Canberra)  
George Maxwell Pridgeon (Gungahlin)  
Dudley Charles Smith (Barton-Capital)  
George Edward Whitfield (Gungahlin)  
Trevor Leslie William Wilson (City of Canberra). George Whitfield's award is to be presented at a later date and an award was made previously to *Ian Oliver Pitt (Gungahlin)*.

## CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

Bob Johnson (Tuggeranong)  
Gwenoth Hazel Kirk (Gungahlin)  
Muriel Edith Pearce (Woden Valley)  
Paul Taylor (Hellenic).

## ANZAC DAY

Over the years, several non-RSL organisations and persons have assisted in the organisation of the ANZAC Day march. This year the following are acknowledged for their assistance:

*The Canberra Times* (accepted by Peter Fray). Each year the paper has published, free of charge, the order of march and the march layout, to enable veterans and spectators to be in the right place at the right time.

ABC Television, Canberra (accepted by Eric Napper), for its live broadcasts of the Canberra march.

Signflair (accepted by Derek Roylance on behalf of Mike Connors), for providing, each year, signs for additional contingents.



*LtCol John J. Merrick (Retd) receives the Meritorious Service Medal.*



*Loraina Lillian Dorham OAM's Life Membership certificate was accepted by Brigadier Neil Horn (Retd).*



*George Derek Fowler (Belconnen) receives Life Membership.*



*David Graeme Millar (Woden Valley): Life Membership.*



*Clive Edward Gardner (City of Canberra): Long Service Award.*



*George Maxwell Pridgeon (Gungahlin): Long Service Award.*



*June Healy OAM accepted Dudley Charles Smith's Long Service Award.*



*Trevor Leslie William Wilson (City of Canberra): Long Service Award.*



*Bob Johnson (Tuggeranong): Certificate of Appreciation.*



*Gwenoth Hazel Kirk (Gungahlin): Certificate of Appreciation.*



*Muriel Edith Page (Woden Valley): Certificate of Appreciation.*



*Paul Taylor (Hellenic): Certificate of Appreciation.*

## Now, where did I park that tank?

### Peat preserves Soviet tank with a Nazi past

A World War II Russian tank found with German markings after 62 years — and, after a little tinkering, the recoverers were able to fire up the diesel engine!

A Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer pulled an abandoned tank from its tomb under the bottom of a lake near Johvi, Estonia. The Soviet-built T34/76A tank had been resting at the bottom of the lake for 56 years. According to its specifications, it's a 27-tonne machine with a top speed of 53km/hr.

From February to September 1944, heavy battles were fought in the 50km-wide Narva front in the north-eastern part of Estonia. More than 100,000 men were killed and 300,000 wounded there. In a battle in the summer of 1944 the tank was captured from the Soviet army and used by the German army (which is why there are German markings painted on the tank's exterior). On September 19, 1944, German troops began an organised retreat along the Narva front. It is suspected that the tank was then driven into the lake and abandoned when its captors left the area.

At that time, a local boy walking past the lake, Kurtna Matasjarv, noticed tank tracks leading into the lake but not coming out anywhere. For two months he saw air bubbles emerging from the lake. This gave him reason to believe that there must be an armoured vehicle at the lake's bottom. A few years ago, he told the story to the leader of the local war history club, Otsing. With other club members, Igor Shedunov initiated diving expeditions to the bottom of the lake about a year ago. At the depth of seven metres they discovered the tank resting under a three-metre layer of peat.

Enthusiasts from the club, under Mr Shedunov's leadership, decided to pull the tank out. In September 2000 they

turned to Mr Aleksander Borovkovthe, manager of the Narva open pit of the stock company AS Eesti Polevkivi, to rent the company's Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer. Still used at the pit, the Komatsu dozer was manufactured in 1995, and has done 19,000 operating hours without major repairs.

The pulling operation took six hours, with several technical breaks. The weight of the tank, combined with the travel incline, created a pulling operation that required significant muscle.

The D375A-2 handled the operation with power and style. The weight of the fully armed tank was about 30 tonnes, so the active force required to retrieve it was similar. A main requirement for the 68-tonne dozer was to have enough weight to prevent shoe-slip while moving up the hill.

After the tank surfaced, it turned out to be a trophy tank that had been captured by the German army in the course of the battle at Sinimaed (Blue Hills) about six weeks before it was sunk in the lake. Altogether, 116 shells were found on board. Remarkably, the tank was in good condition, with no rust, and all systems (except the engine) in working condition. This is a very rare machine, especially considering that it fought both on the Russian and the German sides. Plans are under way to fully restore it. It will be displayed at a war history museum, to be founded at the Gorodenko village on the left bank of the River Narv.

Hiiumaa, Estonia's second-largest island (989 sq km), is in the Baltic Sea, north of the island of Saaremaa, a part of the western Estonian archipelago (Moonsund archipelago). It was occupied in World War I by the Imperial German Army and became a part of independent Estonia after the war. It was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, by Nazi Germany in 1941 and by the Soviets again in 1944. It was then a part of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic until the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. Since then, it has been a part of independent Estonia.

<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?t=91579>

*'Someone at home is thinking of us'*



Australian Defence Force members protecting Australia's Embassy staff in Baghdad have had a welcome surprise in the form of care packages from the RSL. Boxes containing enough for every person contain edible treats, games and reading material. The OC Australia's Security Detachment in Baghdad, Major Ewen Hedges, said the parcels said "someone at home is thinking of us". Above, Private Russell Peacock (A Coy, 7RAR) and Corporal Trish Grace (1 CSSB) eagerly examine a parcel.



The Soviet-built T34/76A tank after it had been pulled from the bottom of the lake. It was in good condition and still had 116 shells aboard.



The moment all the tank's "rescuers" had been waiting for — it emerges from the mire rust-free with its German trophy markings still intact.



The old girl after being cleaned up a little. After a little tinkering the recovery team was able to fire up her diesel engine.



The Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer that pulled the old tank from its watery grave.

# Trooping of the Queen's Colour at RMC

On June 7, at the invitation of RMC Commandant Brigadier Mark Bornholt AM, I represented the ACT State Branch at the Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon for the annual parade celebration marking the Official Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

This very impressive Trooping the Queen's Colour is always well attended and supported. It is also known and admired for the precision parade drill by the Corps of Cadets and the accompaniment of the RMC Band.

The Reviewing Officer was the Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery, AC CVO MC.

In the ceremony the cadets, led by the Commanding officer of the Corps of Cadets, Lieutenant Colonel Mitch Kent, gave three cheers for Her Majesty the Queen.

## Queen's Birthday Honours List

Published in the Queen's Birthday Honours List on Monday 9th June was the notification that our RSL ACT Branch Advocate, Colonel Arthur Craig (Rtd), received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

This is a most deserved award for Arthur, who has given exceptional service as an advocate to our ACT veterans' community for many years

## Annual RSL ACT Congress

The 82nd RSL ACT Branch Congress, held on June 13 at the Hellenic Club, Phillip, prompted good and adverse comment.

Note and action was taken on some adverse comments received on parking problems at this venue last year.

So this year State Secretary James Davidson negotiated complimentary parking vouchers for congress delegates and VIP visitors.

My appreciation is also recorded here of the organisation by Branch Deputy President John King for the minibus and driver provided by Morshead Home for Veterans and aged persons through the Tuggeranong Sub-Branch, which took executives and delegates to and from the Memorial Service at the Australian War Memorial before the formal opening of Congress.

As in past years we were again well accommodated and served by the professional Hellenic Club staff.

The refreshments and the meal provided for our Executive, VIPs and delegates in attendance was first-class. Considerable effort is involved in

## Guest of honour and distinguished guests at RSL ACT 82nd Branch Congress opening

The Guest of Honour and keynote speaker was Major General Steve Gower AO AO [Mil] (Rtd), Director of the Australian War Memorial, who formally opened our Congress and presented League awards to a number of our deserving Branch Executive and Sub-Branch members for their service to the veteran community.

Also at Congress and in several cases addressing delegates were many distinguished guests including Major-General Bill Crews AO (Retd), National President RSL of Australia; Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin; shadow minister for veterans'



RMC cadets Trooping the Queen's Colours at Duntroon on June 7. The Reviewing Officer was the Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC.

organising the congress, which showcases the ACT Branch.

Apart from ANZAC Day, the annual Branch Congress is a most important event in RSL ACT Branch activities.

My sincere thanks to State Secretary James Davidson and the Moore Street State Office Manager David Mills, who provide so much of the required organisation.

It is no small task they undertake on our collective behalf and the lead-up to our Congress is very time-consuming for James and David, while at the same time they are also attending to the day-to-day business and affairs of the ACT Branch.

I offer my appreciation also to the State Executive and a number of pre-nominated delegates, who assisted Mr Davidson, Assistant Secretary Mr Bruce Tunnah OAM JP and Mr David Mills.

## Wreath Laying Service at AWM

As the Parade Commander I was

pleased to be joined again by RSL National President Bill Crews AO (Rtd) and a good number of the branch executive and congress delegates at the Australian War Memorial.

From parade form-up at 0830 hours, we marched to the Pool of Remembrance area to be greeted there by the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General Steve Gower AO AO (Mil) (Rtd), and senior members of his ceremonial events staff. I recited the *Ode* and, in company with our National President, laid a wreath on behalf of the League at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier.

In his position above the AWM entry parapet, a bugler of the RMC Band played *Last Post* and *Rouse*, thus completing the more formal aspects of the Memorial Service. Members either laid their individual poppies upon the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier or against chosen names of the fallen in the cloisters. Gungahlin Sub-Branch again supplied the poppies issued to those at the AWM Ceremony.

affairs Bronwyn Bishop; Margaret Reid AO LLB, Honorary Life Member RSL of Australia; Annette Ellis, MHR for Canberra; Professor Ken Donald AO, Chairman of the Repatriation Medical Authority; Ed Killestyn PSM, Acting Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs; Gary Collins, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Veterans' Affairs; Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Retd), Commissioner, Repatriation Commission; Major-General Paul Stevens AO (Retd), Director of Australian War Graves; Bill Humphreys, State Councillor NSW RSL, representing Don Rowe OAM, NSW State President; Kel

Ryan, Senior Vice President, Queensland RSL; Derek Robson AM, National Secretary of the RSL; and Past Presidents of RSL ACT Branch Ron Metcalfe OAM, Derek Roylance AM and Colleen Thurgar AM.

Also present were many presidents and senior Canberra-based representatives of the Kindred Service Organisations.

The speakers' presentations were most informative and related to veterans' issues and, in part, touched on Branch concerns. Issues addressed will complement separate motions from the other RSL state branches that will

From the President's desk  
RSL ACT STATE BRANCH



Gary Brodie OAM

## Executive elections unopposed

Normally announced at Congress by State Branch Returning Officer Arthur Craig OAM are the ACT Branch Executive members elected unopposed as follows:

President, LtCol John J Merrick (Rtd)  
Deputy President, John King  
Vice Presidents, David Millar, Jan Paulga and June Healy OAM  
Treasurer, Mickey Michaelis  
Assistant Secretary, Bruce Tunnah OAM JP

## Non Elective Positions

Appointed State Secretary James Davidson continues in his appointment as does our State Branch Office Manager (Honorary position) David Mills.

## Next year's RSL ACT State Congress

The 83rd RSL ACT Branch Congress will be held at the Hellenic Club, Woden on June 12, 2009.

## Outgoing Branch President

As many members would be aware, my term as RSL ACT Branch President was completed after Congress this year.

May I offer here my best wishes to the incoming President, LtCol John Merrick (Rtd) and the Branch Executive.

I consider it an honour and a privilege to have worked with and for you all in furthering the objectives of the League and the service and responsibilities we maintain for the veterans in our community.

Gary Brodie OAM  
Past President

now be dealt with at the Annual RSL National Congress in Townsville in September this year.

## Delegates from Port Moresby

The ACT Branch Executive and Sub-Branch delegates joined me in welcoming two delegates from RSL ACT Port Moresby Sub-Branch, PNG: President Joe Filippi DMS and Treasurer Garth McIlwain CBE. It has been many years since delegates from any dedicated overseas sub-branches have attended a Congress in Canberra.

# Service pension and allowances

## Service and Age Pension — maximum rates

Singles rate	\$ 546.80
Couples rate (each)	\$ 456.80

## Income limit before Service Pension reduces

Singles	\$ 132.00
Couples (combined)	\$ 232.00
Illness separated couples (combined)	\$ 232.00
For each child, increase by:	\$ 24.60

## Service Pension Income cut-off limit

Singles	\$ 1,513.50
Couples (combined)	\$ 2,530.50
Illness separated couples (combined)	\$ 2,995.00

## Assets limit before Service Pension reduces

### Home-owners

Singles	\$ 166,750
Couples (combined)	\$ 236,500
Illness separated couples (combined)	\$ 236,500

### Non-home-owners

Singles	\$ 287,750
Couples (combined)	\$ 357,500
Illness-separated couples (combined)	\$ 357,500

## Service Pension assets cut-off limit

### Home-owner

Singles	\$ 535,250
Couples (combined)	\$ 849,500
Illness separated couples (combined)	\$ 973,500

### Non-home-owner

Singles	\$ 656,250
Couples (combined)	\$ 970,500
Illness separated couples (comb.)	\$1,094,500

## Income and assets cut-off limit for the Gold

### Card for

## Service Pensioners Income per fortnight

Singles	\$ 383.75
Couples (combined)	\$ 665.00
For each child, increase by:	\$ 81.60

## Assets -Home-owners

Singles	\$ 234,000
Couples (combined)	\$ 352,000

## Non-homeowners

Singles	\$ 355,000
Couples (combined)	\$ 473,000
For each child increase by	\$ 15,500

## Commonwealth Seniors Health Card income limit (per annum)

Singles	\$ 50,000
Couples (combined)	\$ 80,000
Illness-separated couples (combined)	\$ 100,000

## DISABILITY & WAR WIDOWS PENSIONS & ALLOWANCES

### Disability pension rates

Special rate (T&PI, blinded or TTI)	\$ 970.50
Intermediate rate	\$ 658.50
Extreme disablement adjustment	\$ 535.60

### General rate

100%	\$ 344.80	50%	\$ 172.40
95%	\$ 327.56	45%	\$ 155.16
90%	\$ 310.32	40%	\$ 137.92
85%	\$ 293.08	35%	\$ 120.68
80%	\$ 275.84	30%	\$ 103.44
75%	\$ 258.60	25%	\$ 86.20
70%	\$ 241.36	20%	\$ 68.96
65%	\$ 224.12	15%	\$ 51.72
60%	\$ 206.88	10%	\$ 34.48
55%	\$ 189.64		

## War widows and widower's pension

War widow's/widower's pension	
Indexed component	\$ 563.60
War widow's/widower's pension Supplement	\$ 18.80
Total	\$ 582.40

## Income support supplement (ISS)

Ceiling rate	\$ 163.20
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## Orphan's pension

Single orphan	\$ 80.80
Double orphan	\$ 161.50

## Pharmaceutical allowance

Singles rate	\$ 5.80
Couples rate (each)	\$ 2.90

## Recreation transport allowance

High rate	\$ 70.60
Low rate	\$ 35.10

## Vehicle Assistance Scheme per year

Maintenance and running costs	\$ 1,835.60
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## Attendant allowance

High rate	\$ 264.50
Low rate	\$ 132.10

## Clothing allowance

High rate	\$ 11.00
Mid rate	\$ 7.60
Low rate	\$ 5.10

## Funeral benefits

Assistance of up to \$2,000 is payable towards funeral expenses of certain veterans including T&PI veterans, those whose death is accepted as being war or service caused, and those who died in needy circumstances.

## ELIGIBILITY

"Qualifying Service" is the basic qualification for a service pension. The Age Service Pension can be granted to ex-servicemen on reaching 60 years and to ex-servicewomen between 58½ and 60 years, depending on date of birth. An Invalidity Service Pension can be granted on the grounds of permanent incapacity for work.

Qualifying service is service as a member of a Defence Force during a period of hostilities in an area and at a time when danger from hostile forces of the enemy was incurred. World War 2 service outside Australia before 6 May 1945 (Europe/N.Africa) or 15 August 1945 (S.W.Pacific) counts. Bomb disposal/ mine clearing after those dates counts. Post-World War 2 there must be allotment to an Operational Area e.g. Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, Namibia, Gulf, Cambodia, Somalia, East Timor, Afghanistan.

Areas within Australia are areas of qualifying service, e.g. service in the Darwin area for three consecutive months between 19 February 1942 and 12 November 1943. Service in the Torres Strait Islands between 3 September 1939 and 16 September 1943 is considered to be qualifying service if enlisted elsewhere.

Australian Mariners are eligible under the Veterans' Entitlements Act from July 1, 1994.

If in doubt about qualifying service, veterans and mariners should obtain DVA form D2673 "Application to Determine Qualifying Service", complete the relevant information to your best knowledge and then lodge it with the department.

## 1. VETERANS and MARINERS of COMMONWEALTH and ALLIED COUNTRIES:

These veterans must have at least 10 years' residence in Australia. Commonwealth veterans must have either qualifying service outside the country to whose forces they belonged or service within that country which incurs actual danger from the enemy. The war must be one in which Australian Armed Forces were engaged. There is no entitlement to free Repatriation medical and hospital treatment. A refugee allied veteran must have permanent residency but the 10 years requirement is now waived.

Commonwealth and Allied veterans and mariners qualify for an Invalidity Service Pension if permanently incapacitated for work while in Australia or during a temporary absence from Australia provided they fulfil the residential requirements.

## 2. APPLICATIONS – DECISIONS:

Service pension application (form D503 and relevant supplementary forms) are investigated and decided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Approved applications are usually granted from the date of lodgement of application. Applications should be lodged a month or so before retire-

ment date. It is important that qualifying service is determined before contemplating retirement.

## 3. SERVICE PENSION RATES:

The single or standard rate of pension is payable to an eligible veteran who is single, widowed, divorced or separated. The married rate is payable to a veteran who is a member of a couple and the spouse's pension is payable to the wife or partner of the opposite sex, who is 60 years of age or over or who has dependent children. A single rate pension is payable to each member of a couple if they are unable to live together in a matrimonial home as a result of illness or infirmity of either or both of them and that inability is likely to continue indefinitely.

## 4. MEANS TEST:

The service pension will be payable under either the income or assets test, whichever produces the lower pension rate.

## 5. INCOME SUPPORT SUPPLEMENT (ISS):

This is paid by DVA and is subject to an Income and Assets Test.

## 6. FRINGE BENEFITS:

All service pensioners and war widows receiving Income Support are eligible for a Pension Concession Card (PCC) entitling them to Fringe Benefits. The Commonwealth Seniors Health Card is granted to eligible veterans who pass the income test but fail the asset test. It gives pharmaceutical and telephone benefits. A normal service pension claim must be made.

## 7. PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS:

Pharmaceuticals prescribed under the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) or PBS are paid for at the concession rate of \$5.00 per item up to a Safety Net of 58 items or \$290 annually, then will be free. The Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid fortnightly; \$5.80 single, \$2.90 each for couple. DVA treatment card must be presented to chemists to obtain concession rate. Ensure your Prescription Record Form is filled out. This is required to obtain a Safety Net from a Health Insurance Commission Office or a community or public hospital pharmacy.

## 8. MEDICAL:

Medical costs will only be accepted by DVA by the production of a DVA treatment card.

## 9. TREATMENT CARD ELIGIBILITY:

White Card: Accepted war caused disabilities, cancers, TB, PTSD, Depression

Gold Card:(1) 100% disability pension, TPI, EDA, War Widow/er, or (2) 50% DP or more, and any service pension, or (3) Service pension within treatment level. (4) Aust veterans over 70 yrs with Qualifying Service.

Orange Card: British and Allied – Qualifying Service

Pharmaceutical only – RPBS List

Allied veterans and mariners, and service pensioner spouses or widows do not have eligibility for the Gold Card.

## 10. BEREAVEMENT PAYMENT:

Following death, one further Service Pension Payment will be made. The surviving partner of a couple will receive Special Temporary Allowance for 14 weeks.

A Veteran's Disability Pension will continue to be paid for 12 weeks following death to the widow or dependent. The payment rate is the accepted rate at death.

## 11. FUNERAL BENEFIT:

A funeral Benefit of \$2,000 may be paid on the death of a Veteran or Australian Mariner. e.g. TPI, EDA, POW, in an institution, of "accepted disability", in poor or needy circumstances.

## A.C.T. CONTACTS

ANZAC HOUSE (02) 6162 2670

Personal and phone advice and help is available to all veterans, mariners, dependents and serving members.

No Fees or Charges for Services Provided

## N.S.W. CONTACTS

ANZAC HOUSE (02) 9264 8188

Personal and phone advice and help is available to all veterans, mariners, dependents and serving members.

RSL DVA OFFICE (1st Floor) (02) 9213 7479 Weekdays 10am – 3pm

RSL R.G.H. CONCORD OFFICE (02) 9743 1220

Weekdays 8am – 4pm RSL Office in the Medical Centre  
No Fees or Charges for Services Provided

## Membership has its say

# Congress resolutions cover many topics

The 82nd RSL ACT Congress began with a welcome to the guest of honour, Major General Steve Gower AO AO(Mil) (Ret'd), the Director of the Australian War Memorial, who formally opened the congress. The President also thanked General Gower for his help in facilitating the wreath-laying ceremony, earlier that morning, at the Memorial.

Motions, all carried, were:

**Pharmaceutical co-payments:** that the pharmaceutical co-payment for accepted conditions on the Gold and White Cards and for special rate recipients and war widow/ers be removed. Moved by Woden Valley Sub-Branch and seconded by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch.

**Future of the League:** that a state committee be formed to identify the likely future requirements of ACT serving members, veterans, and those ex-service personnel without qualifying service, and to approach RSL National HQ with these findings. Moved by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch and seconded by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**Eligible service:** that the concept of eligible service be preserved and that "warlike", "hazardous" and "peacetime" service be clearly defined.

Moved by Peacekeepers Sub-Branch and Seconded by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**Rationalisation of overseas payments:** that payment of Australian benefits to veterans and war widow/ers living overseas be made direct to their local bank accounts without the loss of value. Moved by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch and seconded by Tuggeranong Sub-Branch.

**Benefits for children of deceased veterans:** that the benefits for eligible



*The wreath-laying before the Congress.*

dependant children of veterans paid under the VEA be the same as those for eligible children under MRCA, where the veteran's death is service-related. Moved by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch and seconded by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch.

**Shingles treatment:** that the Returned and Services League request DVA to provide vaccination (Zostavax) for all veterans, especially those who have

previously suffered from chicken pox. Moved by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch and seconded by Woden Valley Sub-Branch.

**Gold cards:** that the Returned and Services League investigate the seeming anomaly of refusal by some medical practitioners to service Gold Card holders because of the low reimbursement rate by DVA. Moved by Campbell-Russell Sub-Branch and seconded by

Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**Service Home Loan:** that the Service Home Loan be increased to \$150,000. Moved by Tuggeranong Sub-Branch and seconded by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**Funeral allowance:** that the funeral allowance for eligible veterans who die of accepted conditions be increased from the current level of \$2,000 to the amount under MRCA, which is \$9,297.00 as at 5 July 2007 (DVA Fact Sheets BR01 and MRC17 refer). Moved by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch and seconded by City of Canberra Sub-Branch.

**DFRDB:** that the Returned and Services League continue to pressure the Federal Government to treat DFRDB as a funded scheme, or at least partly funded, for taxation purposes and that the tax exemptions be applied in a manner similar to those applied to funded schemes. Moved by Belconnen Sub-Branch and seconded by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**DFRDB:** that the Returned and Services League continue to pressure the Federal Government to apply the greater of CPI or male total average weekly earnings adjustments to military superannuation. Moved by Woden Valley Sub-Branch and seconded by Barton-Capital Sub-Branch.

**DFRDB:** that the Returned and Services League continue to pressure the Federal Government that the pre-commutation value of the pension be applied once the commutation amount has been repaid (generally based on a life expectancy calculation). Moved by Tuggeranong Sub-Branch and seconded by City of Canberra Sub-Branch.

**More reports — Page 8**

## Questions for prisoners of war book

In the first book, *Aussie Soldier up Close and personal*, Big Sky Publishing looked at the core values of the Australian soldier. The publishers are now researching *Aussie Soldier — Prisoners of War*, the second in this series. In this book we wish to tell the story of the Army's men and women who were captured and held prisoners of war from the Boer War to Korea. Australian soldiers who were prisoners of war are asked to contribute to this book.

The stages of being a prisoner of war that we will examine are capture, processing, daily life, escape, humour, war crimes, compassion/mateship, and repatriation.

Big Sky Publishing would also like to include a chapter on Australian seamen and airmen prisoners of war.

Personal details being sought are name, DOB, enlistment year and in which state, age on enlistment and, if applicable, discharge; date of discharge; what corps you joined; what operation or deployments you were involved in leading up to your capture; your brief military history (units served, rank, honours and awards, postings etc); and whether you consent to having your story included in *Aussie*

### *Soldier — Prisoners Of War?*

The publishers want respondents to provide as much detail as possible.

The aim is to provide readers with an insight into what the soldiers who were made prisoners went through and share some of their experiences with them but former POWs do not need to answer all of the questions — just those that have personal meaning.

### The questions

1. What were the immediate events that occurred just prior to your capture?
2. Capture — Describe the method by which the enemy captured you. Was it an order from a superior, or a decision based on the circumstances? What were your initial emotions?
3. Processing — How were you treated initially? Did the enemy show compassion, indifference or other emotions? What questions did they ask you?
4. Daily life — In your prison camp/s, what was the daily routine? What were the food and sleeping arrangements like? Was there any entertainment? What was the workload like? Did Red Cross or equivalent parcels arrive?
5. Escape — What were the feelings and actions towards escape? Did you attempt escape and what was the result? Did you witness other escape attempts? What were the results?
6. Humour — How important was humour as a POW? What pranks or conversations were important or entertaining? What nicknames did you give the guards?
7. War crimes — We understand that this question may be difficult and apologies if it is uncomfortable. Can you describe acts of cruelty, breaches of the Geneva Conventions or brutality shown towards our soldiers or yourself? How did you and your mates react? Were the perpetrators ever brought to justice?
8. Compassion/mateship — What acts of kindness and mateship did you witness while being a POW? What impact did these actions have on fellow prisoners or the enemy? Did the enemy show any acts of compassion to prisoners?
9. Repatriation — At what point did you consider yourself free? How did you hear that the war was over? How did your guards react to this? How were you treated by your rescuers or the Allied soldiers who freed/re-

ceived you? How did you feel being on Australian soil and having your first beer? How did your family react? How hard was it to re-establish relationships with family and friends? How were you supported by the government, friends, families and other agencies?

10. Apart from the listed chapters can you identify any other aspect of being a POW that Australians need to hear about and why?

11. How has your POW experience shaped your life?

12. Do you have any other military or personal experience/story you want told?

Anybody wanting further questions or wish to assist in other way contact one of the authors:

Denny Neave (mobile) 0407615490  
[denny@bigskypublishing.com.au](mailto:denny@bigskypublishing.com.au)  
 Craig Smith (mobile) 0403162966  
[craighedwsmith@yahoo.com](mailto:craighedwsmith@yahoo.com)

Questionnaires should be returned by no later than 30 July 2008 to either of the above emails. Hard copies can be sent to:

*Aussie Soldier*  
 Big Sky Publishing  
 PO Box 303  
 Newport NSW 2106

# Bulletin Board Bulletin Board Bulletin Board

## RAAF photographers' reunion

Plotters, photographer, interpreters and allied musters, October 14 to October 21, 2009

at  
Caloundra, Sunshine Coast,  
Queensland  
Low-key activities with a dinner on the Saturday  
Come for as long as you are able to and relive the memories.

For details, Contact:  
[photos@live.com.au](mailto:photos@live.com.au)

or  
Photos

165 Hotspur Crescent  
Little Mountain  
Queensland 4551

## Female agents in WWII France



The distributors of a new French film, *Les Femmes de l'ombre*, with English sub-titles, can provide tickets to advance screenings to give away to members. The story is set in May 1944. A five-woman commando unit parachutes into occupied France on a daring and dangerous mission to protect the secret of the D-Day landings and eliminate Colonel Heindrich, the head of the German counterintelligence.

Louise is a trained sniper and the widow of a Resistance leader. Jeanne is a tough hooker who won't hesitate to kill. Gaelle is a young and brilliant explosives expert desperate to see some action. Suzy is a stunning former show-girl and Heindrich's one-time lover. Maria is an Italian *contessa* undercover

agent with the French Resistance.

Based on true events, true stories and real heroines, *Les Femmes de L'ombre* is an action-packed and powerful tribute to the brave female World War II Resistance fighters, who were constantly in the shadow of men yet had an undeniably profound impact on the events of the war.

Directed by Jean-Paul Salome and starring Sophie Marceau, Julie Depardieu, Marie Gillain, Maya Sansa, Deborah Francois and Moritz Bleibtreu. **In cinemas August 7 (advance screenings August 1–3)**

The link to the UK web site and the trailer is [www.femaleagents.co.uk](http://www.femaleagents.co.uk) An Australian web site is being created and the film will retain its French title in Australia.

## Date for Battle for Australia Day set in September

The Battle for Australia will be marked on the first Wednesday in September each year, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, announced on June 26.

The Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC (Retd), had signed the proclamation for the Battle for Australia Day.

It will not be a public holiday nor will it detract from "the importance of Australia's two most significant days of commemoration, ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, on which we remember all Australians who served and died in wars, conflicts and peace-time operations," Mr Griffin said.

Then Prime Minister John Curtin announced the Battle for Australia when Singapore fell on February 15, 1942.

However, the first Wednesday in September has been chosen by the veteran community as it represents the first defeat of Japanese forces on land in the Battle of Milne Bay.

Mr Griffin said, "Battle for Australia Day will commemorate the service and sacrifice of all those who served in defence of Australia in 1942 and 1943, when we faced the gravest threats to our nation.

"This national day of observance will provide tangible recognition and greater community awareness of the contribution to Australia's freedom and democracy of those who fought in the Battle for Australia. ..."

## Special rates for RSL members to visit battlefields

Dennis John WEATHERALL is a member of the RSL (NSW) and an ex (Navy) WO Seaman.

In his civilian life he operates as a qualified battlefield guide, arranging visits to Australian battlefields around the world.

In the current issues of *Navy/Army & Air Force News*, June 12, 2008 he has advertisements for a visit to Vietnam, for the 42nd Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

For special rates for RSL members, full details can be viewed on the active web site:

[www.battlefieldsoftheworld.com](http://www.battlefieldsoftheworld.com) along with 2009 "War Trails" visits to the battlefields of Europe.

Details of the recent "John Monash" ANZAC Day (2008) visit to Gallipoli may be viewed.

Contact "Weathers"  
Telephone: (02) 9520 6023

[dweatherall\\_eng@bigpond.com](mailto:dweatherall_eng@bigpond.com)

## Field Ambulance

Second Field Ambulance Past Members Association's reunion in Adelaide is on October 17–19.

Details from Phil  
07 3869 0250;  
[dha09232@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dha09232@bigpond.net.au)

## Call sign 42: 2010 reunion plans

6 RAR EAST TIMOR 2000: Call sign 42 is attempting to conduct a 10th anniversary of the return from deployment from East Timor on October 30, 2010. Expressions of interest are sought from members of the platoon so accommodation etc can be organised.

Contact: Col Bishop (0432 063 453)  
e-mail: [A\\_227611@hotmail.com](mailto:A_227611@hotmail.com)

## Korea Veterans' Day

Korea Veterans Day Commemorative Ceremony at the Australia National Korean War Memorial, ANZAC Parade, Canberra ACT is on Sunday, July 27 at 11.30am.

RSVP by June 27 to

Ceremonial Officer:

02 62418587  
11 Mawalan Street  
Mawalan ACT 2913

## Radio Ron calling

Ron Metcalfe's radio show, focusing on veterans, is on in the ACT region on the first Thursday of every month at 9.15am and then again at 8pm on Radio One (1120 AM Band)

## ARMY APPRENTICES WANTED

60TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION & MEMORIAL DEDICATION  
ALBURY/BANDIANA  
24th–26th OCTOBER 2008

For details:

[www.austarmyapprentice.org](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)

Contact: Frank Maloney (13thVM)  
0418 728 181

Don't miss this one

## Retiring Chief of Army farewelled in ceremonial parade

A farewell parade for the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, was held on July 3 at Sir Thomas Blamey Square, Russell Offices, Canberra.

Lieutenant General Leahy has retired from an Army career that spanned 37 years — six of those commanding the Australian Army.

At the ceremony, command of the Army was handed over to the present Vice Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie.

Among those present were the Secretary of Defence, Mr Nick Warner PSM; the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston AC AFC; and the Deputy Chief of Army, Major General David Morrison AM.

## RAN change of command

A ceremony to mark the change in command for the Navy was held on July 3 at HMAS Harman when Vice Admiral Russ Shalders, AO, CSC, RAN, handed over to Rear Admiral Russ Crane, CSM, RAN.

## ACT commemoration of Battle of Britain

The inaugural ACT Commemoration of the Battle of Britain will be held on Friday 12 September 2008, a.m. at the Australian War Memorial. Be there: your support is needed. More details to be published later.

Enquiries to the Chairman of the Commemoration Committee:

Paddy Mahony (02) 6254 3934

[bpmahony@velocitynet.com.au](mailto:bpmahony@velocitynet.com.au)

See report on page 12

## RAAF chief hands over

The Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd, AO, received the salute at his final Graduation Parade on July 2 at RAAF Base East Sale. Air Marshal Mark Binskin AM assumed command of the Air Force on 4 July.

## The Battle of Britain's heroes remembered

### Never in the field of human conflict ...

It is hoped that recognition of the Battle of Britain and the crucial consequences it had for the outcome of World War II will be more widely honoured in Canberra in the years ahead.

These sentiments were expressed last September when the British Sub-Branch held what was probably the only commemoration service in the National Capital to mark this historic victory. The venue was the memorial in the grounds of the British High Commission to the "shared sacrifice in the defence of freedom" of the peoples of Australia and Britain.

In keeping with the spirit of the occasion, other organisations were invited, such as the RAAF Association ACT Division, the RSL ACT Branch and the Australia Britain Society ACT.

Brigadier Jeremy Robbins MBE RM laid a wreath on behalf of the British High Commissioner. Air Commodore James Coward AFC (Retd) and Group Captain Doug Hurst MBE (Retd) laid wreaths on behalf of the RAF Association and the RAAF Association respectively. (James Coward is one of the "The Few". A Spitfire pilot, he survived a horrific wound when shot down in the battle). Other wreaths were laid by Air Vice Marshall Desmond Hall CB CMG CBE AFC for the British Sub-Branch; Mr Hugh Parker for the Royal Naval Association and Ms Pat Bowden for the English in Australia Club. Vice-President Paddy Mahony was the MC for the occasion and AVM Hall stood in for an indisposed chap-



From left to right: Paddy Mahony, Air Commodore Coward, Brigadier Robbins, Air Commodore Hurst and (seated) Air Vice Marshall Hall.

lain with a prayerful poem of his own composition. Piper Gordon Henderson played the solemn lament *Flowers of the Forest*.

After the service, lunch was served in the function room of the High Commission, where the principal guests were Brigadier and Mrs Robbins and Mr Jan Paulga, of the RSL ACT Branch Executive.

In the course of a traditional Raj-era curry lunch cooked by Mary Mahony with the help of Elizabeth Kennedy, AVM Hall gave an especially interesting address, based on French sources, of the pivotal parts played in

the Battle by Lord Dowding (C-in-C Fighter Command), Lord Beaverbrook (Minister for Aircraft Production) and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The strategic vision and energy of these leaders were responsible for, firstly, enabling the Allied forces to prepare for the coming struggle to prevent Britain from being invaded at a time when the success of the German blitzkrieg threatened to draw more combat squadrons into inevitable destruction in France.

Then, after Dunkirk, as the triumphant Luftwaffe set about attacking the air defences of Great Britain,

production of Spitfires and Hurricanes was increased, outstripping losses. As Desmond Hall said, there were major mistakes on the German side, such as the premature switch from destroying the RAF to bombing cities. Addressing these factors, he pointed out, by no means detracted from honouring the skill and courage of those who fought in the battle.

The sacrifice of British, Australian and other Commonwealth and allied servicemen and women would rightly be the focus of that day but the role of these leaders deserved equal recognition.

### Choristers at large



The Australian Rugby Choir, accompanied by the RMC Duntroon Band (both top right of the picture), at a recent dedication at the Australian War Memorial.

Since April, the Australian Rugby Choir has continued to present a balanced male choir with the band of the Royal Military College at all plaque dedication ceremonies.

The director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General Steve Gower AO (Mil) (Rtd), has again expressed the appreciation of all those attending these ceremonies for the contribution of the band and the choir.

The major presentation was the ANZAC day service, which more than 20,000 attended. The choir provided

about 50 choristers for this special service to lead the singing.

Attendance by the choir at recent plaque dedication ceremonies included:

- 4RAR/NZ Regiment
- 1st Battalion Association
- 35 Squadron. Transport – RAAF
- Aged veterans wreath-laying
- RAAF forward air controllers
- No 12 Field Regiment R.A.A.
- Bomber Command

Details of the choir's future engagements are available on:

[www.rugbychoir.org.au](http://www.rugbychoir.org.au)

### PNG jungle's 66-year-old secret



Photo by Mark Reichman

A man examines the remains of the tail section of Hudson bomber A16-126.

A RAAF Hudson bomber, lost in a remote region of Papua New Guinea in World War II, was confirmed found on June 29. The plane, A16-126, was part of a formation of three RAAF Hudson bombers that attacked Japanese shipping at Gasmata harbour, New Britain, PNG on 11 February, 1942.

Over the target, the RAAF bombers were intercepted by Japanese fighters that had scrambled from Gasmata airfield. A16-126 was listed as "lost by enemy action". The plane has been located — 66 years after it went missing — in thick jungle on a ridge inland from the town of Gasmata.

Four men were lost with the aircraft: Flying Officer Graham Ian Gibson,

Pilot Officer Frank Leslie Oliver Thorn, Sergeant Barton Irving Coutie, and Sergeant Arthur Edward Quail.

The RAAF is now begin planning a full recovery operation with the assistance of the PNG Government.

A team including forensic specialists will conduct a thorough site examination.

Air Force has contacted relatives of three of the four crew members of the aircraft but continues trying to locate relatives of Sergeant Arthur Edward Quail (Service number A404748) who was from Biloela, Queensland. People with information should contact the Defence Public Inquiry line on 02 6265 2999.